



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th MPAD)

Col. Randal G. Martin (left), commander, 1169th Engineer Group receives his 'First Team' combat patch from Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Cavalry Division deputy commanding general for support, in a ceremony Nov. 18 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. The patch of the 1st Cav. Div. is the largest patch in the U.S. Army.

Right of passage:

Engineers earn combat patches

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - A patch is meant to cover a hole in an article of clothing. In the Army, wearing a combat patch fills a void on the right sleeve of the Army combat uniform. When a Soldier fills in the missing panel, he is not only completing his duty uniform, but displaying his war-time service for the whole world to see.

The most recent recipients of the

largest combat patch in the Army are the Soldiers of 1169th Engineer Group, an Army National Guard unit out of Huntsville, Ala., who received their shoulder sleeve insignia for war-time service here with Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Cavalry Division deputy commanding general for support, as a guest at the ceremony Nov. 18.

"Since 75 percent of the unit had never deployed, I wanted to do something special," said Col. Randal G. Martin, com-

mander, 1169th Eng. Grp.

Martin said receiving a combat patch is something a Soldier will never forget, no matter what the accomplishment means to him.

"It means a lot to me because the 1st Cav. Div. has such a rich history and I'm proud to be a part of its history. I'm sure this next year is going to be another rich

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Don't you forget about me...

Children at middle school remember troops

By Hillary S. Meeks
Killeen Daily Herald

Audie Murphy Middle School sixth-grader Kaylin Self carefully wrote her father's name, Sgt. Robert Riccardino, on a plastic ribbon. Then she handed it, and a picture of her father, to counselor Byron Burrow so he could staple it on a board next to the words, "Audie's Heroes."

"See, your Soldier is the first one up there," Burrow told Self, who looked at the board approvingly.

That Soldier's picture and name were soon followed by dozens of others Thursday evening as students came to attend the "Heroes Dinner" hosted by the Audie Murphy Parent-Teacher Association. Soldiers and their families were invited to eat and to watch an entertaining program of patriotic dances, songs and speeches.

"Usually when a husband leaves, it's all about him. But since he's not here, the school made us feel important - they make it about the families," said Michele West, mother of two Audie Murphy students. "It's also good they support the Soldiers while they're over there defending our country."

Support was the theme of the evening, and school counselors Burrow and his wife, Susan Burrow, teamed up with PTA president Darie McCleaves to make it a stellar event.

"We had to find a way to get (the Soldiers and their families) all in one location without having them spend money out of their pocket," McCleaves said. "It's not just about Soldiers - look around, it's about anybody that deployed who has a child at this school."

McCleaves gave special thanks to corporate sponsors Northrop Grumman, a defense contractor that provided volunteers

to serve the food, and Bush's Chicken, which donated most of the dinner.

While families dined on their "chow," guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Jackeline Fountain gave an impassioned address. "I'm a little emotional right now, because I'm supposed to inspire you by coming here tonight, but you have inspired me," she said.

Fountain said while everyone was in line for food, she talked to children, parents and grandparents, discovering many of them were holding their heads high though most had a family member deployed to Iraq.

"I know that our teachers, our coaches and our parents are doing everything they can so we Soldiers can go fight the war," she told the crowd. "I am glad that our children can come (to Audie Murphy Middle School) and feel comfortable with what we're doing over there."

Arabic Phrase of the Day

rajaa'an iid-ha

**Defined:
Please repeat
it**

Iraq 3-Day Forecast



Today

High: 65
Low: 41



Tomorrow

High: 66
Low: 43



Friday

High: 70
Low: 52

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(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Lewis, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Duffel Bag Drag!

Spc. Angel Burgos, a native of Ponce, Puerto Rico, with 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, hands one of hundreds of duffel bags off-loaded at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, to Spc. Justin Blessing, a native of Nineveh, Indiana, with 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, as trail elements and individual replacements for the 1st Cavalry Division arrive Nov. 18 in the Middle East. The Soldiers later secured their gear and settled for a good nights rest before moving out for training they'll receive before proceeding to Iraq.

Engineers put on the largest patch in the Army

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chapter," said Martin, a native of Huntsville, Ala.

The ceremony was also important because the engineer group is providing an invaluable service to America's 'First Team'.

The 1169th provides command and

control of the 130th Eng. Battalion, which is charged with route clearing missions, and the 20th Eng. Bn., which handles construction projects, the 34-year veteran said.

"The group's mission is to build bridges, literally and emotionally, with the people of Iraq. We need to show them we're trying to better their country," said Spc. Wesley Acord, personnel administrative specialist from Montgomery, Ala.

No matter the mission, for most Soldiers receiving a combat patch, the experience is a rite of passage. For Sgt. Terri White, a signal support specialist with the 1169th, it means something to her family as well, she said.

"It'll mean that my children will have more freedom and have the choice to serve," said the Dothan, Ala., native. "I'd rather do it for them than have them have to do it."

First Sergeant first to re-up with Black Jack

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq - Although the retention section of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division has been reenlisting Soldiers since its arrival to Kuwait last month, Nov. 15 was something special.

First Sgt. Kahrim Singleton, the top noncommissioned officer of Company A, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, reenlisted in front of a small formation on the palace's third-floor balcony overlooking the Baghdad skyline, becoming the first Soldier in the Black Jack Brigade to reenlist in Iraq.

Uncharacteristic of the usually outspoken first sergeant, Singleton's only words for his final reenlistment were for his Soldiers to "focus on the mission and get these young Soldiers reenlisted."

A son of New Orleans, Singleton's story reads like a TV movie-of-the-week script; overcoming many different obstacles to get where he is today.

Soldiers throughout the 2nd BSTB who know him or know of him call him a "fast-tracker," a term used to describe individuals who seem to dismiss the Army's average time for promotion.

"I've been very lucky," said Singleton of his career as a Soldier. "I'm educated, and I just want to lead Soldiers."

Yet, throughout his life, luck wasn't something the civilian world issued to him as much as he claims it has as a Soldier.

After three years of attending Louisiana's Southern



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Capt. Letisha Wayne (left) and 1st Sgt. Kahrim Singleton recite the oath of enlistment during his reenlistment ceremony at Forward Operating Base Prosperity Nov. 15.

University, he worked in the private sector as a social worker, but when the agency he worked at went under, he decided to walk into a recruiting station to fulfill a lifelong desire.

"I worked eight years as a social worker. The program went belly up, and I really didn't find it rewarding," he said. "I was looking for a change."

Singleton enlisted in February 1996; that's right, 1996.

During the enlistment process, he decided to take the Infantry recruit with Airborne Ranger option at 29 years old - an option typically taken by much younger enlistees.

Being the oldest of four brothers and growing up as a scholastic athlete, he said he was always a mentor to others, but it was the first day of basic training when he started growing into the leader he would

eventually become.

"I was the platoon guide from start to finish," he said. "I just like being in charge. I always strived to be in charge."

As a leader, his Soldiers describe him to be that type of leader who is the first one to work and the last to leave it. They say he has that "fatherly" quality that shows he cares. Still, he said that he catches some of his Soldiers doing impressions of his walk or the way he speaks to them.

"I can hear them doing my 'come here son,'" he said laughing. "I take it as a form of flattery - if they do the imitation well. I figure if you can imitate me, then at least you are listening."

As a leader of Soldiers, Singleton follows a basic rule: not asking his Soldiers to do anything he hasn't done before or is not willing to do now.

"How am I going to lead

these Soldiers from the rear?" he asked. "They have access to me 24 hours a day. If they are in trouble, all they have to do is call, and I'm coming. It's all about my Soldiers. I can get by on my own, but the Soldiers, they need me."

For what was originally supposed to only be a four-year hitch, he said making a choice to stay in the Army has made him "complete."

"It makes me feel complete. I didn't like having an ETS (expiration time-in-service). Now, with this out of the way, I can concentrate totally on the mission and Soldiers," he said.

As for what's next, Singleton said he wants to stay Cav.

"As long as DA (Department of the Army) lets me stay, I'll be with the Cav.," he said. "I'll be here. I kinda like my Stetson."